

The Kingston Bank (Kingston Trust Company)  
27 Main Street  
Kingston  
Ulster County  
New York

HABS No. NY-5571

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5571

## THE KINGSTON BANK

(Kingston Trust Company)

Location: 27 Main Street, Kingston, Ulster County, New York.

Latitude 41° 55' 59" Longitude 74° 01' 06"

Present Owner  
and Occupant:

Kingston Trust Company.

Present Use:

Bank and related offices.

Significance:

A fine Greek Revival bank, which has been used continuously for that purpose since 1839, was combined with a residence in the same building thus illustrating an example of early nineteenth century small town commercial practices.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The construction of the bank was started circa 1838, and was finished the following year.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

1836 Deed: 6 August 1836, Recorded: 7 September 1836  
liber 47, page 214  
John Van Buren  
Laura A. P. Van Buren, his wife  
to  
The Kingston Bank

Later the bank became the Kingston National Bank and is now known as the Kingston Trust Company.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not known.
5. Original plan and construction: The building as originally constructed was a banking office facing Main Street with an attached residence facing Fair Street. The cost of its construction was \$20,000.

6. Alterations and additions: In 1905 the building was extensively remodeled and enlarged. The architect was Myron Teller. A sixteen-foot addition was added on parallel to the Main Street side. An article in the Kingston Daily Leader of 23 March 1906 described the building:

"The old building is of Grecian architecture, of the massive Doric order, similar to the Temple of Theseus at Athens with two large columns at the entrance. Its handsome stately architecture was carefully followed in all its details by the architect throughout all the improvements. The old stone steps leading to the front entrance were removed, openings made between the columns and pilasters, and two separate entrances leading to the front door, while a large Palladian window was inserted in the easterly end of the addition. This last greatly improved the lighting of the room.

The banking apartment is now 45 feet in length, 21 feet in width, with ceiling 18 feet in height. Passing through the street door, the vestibule is first entered. It is of quartered oak with paneled and moulded wainscoting, and large plate glass doors. There are two depositors' desks, one each side of the vestibule. A ladies' room with conveniences for writing has been added, adjoining which is a complete lavatory. The flooring of the public space of the banking room is of ceramic mosaic tiling. To preserve the wood work, the sub baseboard is of slate. The banking enclosure extends nearly the whole length of the room. Its lower portion is of quartered oak with raised and moulded panels. Above the desk line there is a banking screen of oak pilasters and columns supporting a cornice and frieze, the space between the pilasters and columns being filled in with bronze grilles. The frieze in cornice, the capitals and pilasters are a counterpart of those supporting the roof of the Greek Temple of the Winds. At the openings are bracket shelves. On each wicket is a bronze plate with the words "Cashier," "Teller," etc. The desks contain 5 drawers and conveniences for books in daily use. To enter the banking enclosure one must pass through a cast iron bronze gate that weighs 500 pounds, but swings lightly between bronze posts. When the gate closes, no one inside can leave unless an electric button is touched by the cashier, or the same is opened with a key, the visitor being virtually a prisoner until one of the bank officers allows him to depart.

Within the enclosure is a telephone room with doors, a coat room and lavatory for use of the banking force. A door leads into the directors' room, the windows of which command a view of Fair Street and the grounds of the First Reformed Church. The vault is burglar proof. Additional safes will be added with safety boxes for rental. All the glass used in the improvement is American polished plate. The door openings are beveled plate. The bank is heated with steam and lighted with electricity. The bank will be painted an ivory white with a slight creamy tint."

As it stands now, the bank has had the already mentioned addition to the east on Main Street and an appendage to the north on Fair Street. Modern one-over-one double-hung windows have been installed throughout the building. The front door to the residence on Fair Street has been filled in and replaced with a window matching the others.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Joseph S. Smith, an officer of the bank, under whose supervision the building was erected, was a prominent Kingston citizen. He served the bank in various capacities for many years and at one time resided in the bank building.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: An old photograph from the book Picturesque Ulster shows the southwest elevation of the bank. Included in the HABS collection.

Oil painting of the Kingston Bank, circa 1842, in possession of the Kingston Trust Company.

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deeds, County Clerk's Office, Ulster County Office Building, Kingston, New York.

- b. Secondary and published sources:

De Lisser, R. Lionel. Picturesque Ulster. Kingston, New York, 1896.

"Old Kingston Bank", Kingston Daily Leader, March 23, 1906.

Sylvester, Nathaniel Bartlett. History of Ulster County, New York. Philadelphia: 1880.

Prepared by: William C. Badger  
Historian  
Historic American Buildings  
Survey  
Summer 1972

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a good example of a Greek Revival bank building constructed in conjunction with a residence for an officer of the institution.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in excellent condition.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The building consists of a middle block which is five bays deep and approximately four bays wide and is two stories with a basement and an attic.
2. Foundation: The house sits on stone and brick foundation.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The building has brick walls painted cream color with white trim. The lintels, sills, columns and exterior door moldings are dark brown sandstone. An ashlar water table above the foundation runs around the original portion of the building.

4. Structural system, framing: The brick exterior walls supporting the building are loadbearing type. The wooden interior walls are primarily lath and plaster. There are early sawn wood floor joists. The building's roof structure is wooden truss system.
5. Porch: The entrance portico consists of a recessed porch under the front pediment and contains two brick pilasters on either side and two brownstone Doric columns, distyle in antis.
6. Chimney: There is one large chimney existing to the rear of the middle block of the building.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The front entrance is surrounded by a classical architrave. It has two fixed glass transoms, one over the other with a classically decorated lintel between. The original doors have been replaced with modern aluminum and plate glass doors. The door on the rear addition that faces Fair Street is wooden with glass and has a rectangular transom. It is also surrounded by a classical architrave.
  - b. Windows and shutters: The entry portico contains four windows set high in line with the height of the transoms. Other windows are wooden one-over-one double hung with no dividing bars except in the rear addition where new windows, some with lead mullions, have been interjected. Most windows have dark brown sandstone sills and lintels. In the cornice that surrounds the top of the main block of the building there are small oddly-shaped windows, each of which have a cast-iron frame designed in a laurel leaf motif.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: The roof over the middle portion of the building is hipped, and the front section's roof is gabled with a pedimented southern end. The southeast addition has a gabled roof with a broken pediment facing east. These roofs are all covered with seamed tin. The roof of the rear addition is sloped slightly and is of tar-covered tin. There is a skylight in the front gabled roof.

- b. Cornice: The main block of the building has a full entablature of classical design embellished by small oddly shaped windows already mentioned. These windows have ornate cast-iron surrounds, running along the frieze. The same entablature without windows and with a smaller frieze runs along the front portico and side sections and the southeast addition. The rear addition has a similar entablature.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement of the bank is a large brick and stone room with several changes of level. There are some partitions between brick piers dividing the space into coal bins and storage areas as well as the main furnace area.
  - b. First floor: The entrance through the portico leads into a vestibule and then into the main lobby of the bank. The vestibule has a classical portico with a pediment and cornice. On either side of this vestibule are offices divided from the lobby by screen partitions of low height. The large space contains six Corinthian columns and two similar pilasters which have been painted to simulate marble veins. The large room is divided into a grid of nine portions by these columns. This grid is reinforced by the shape of the coffers in the ceiling. On the east side of the room, there is a new line of tellers cages and on the right there is an open area where the officers' desks are placed. The bank vaults are on the opposite wall from the main entrance.
  - c. Second floor: The second floor is presently divided into offices. It also contains a large board room.
  - d. Attic: There is some finished attic space used for offices and storage in the main block of the building.
2. Stairways: The stairs are located in well in the northwest addition. There are steel stairs with concrete treads to the basement from the principal level and marble treads to the offices on the second floor. The banisters are also steel with a wooden hand rail.

3. Flooring: The main bank floor is carpeted. The vestibule has a terrazzo and marble floor and it appears that this floor extends under the carpet the entire lobby space. Some office areas have vinyl tile and some have ceramic tile. Others are covered with carpet. The basement has a concrete and brick floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls in the main lobby are plaster scored to look like stone blocks and are painted light blue. There is some paneled wainscoting in the main lobby. The board room in the second floor has new paneled walls. The plaster ceilings in the main lobby have coffers with decorative moldings painted gold.
5. Doors: Paneled wooden doors are found throughout the bank.
6. Decorative features and trim: The trim on the vestibule consists of classical moldings with a bowl and fruit design on the pediment.
7. Hardware: Simple hardware is found on the doors.
8. Mechanical Equipment:
  - a. Heating: The building is heated by an oil burning furnace.
  - b. Lighting: There are modern fluroescent ceiling lights placed in the coffers of the ceilings in the main lobby.
- D. Site: The building faces south on Main street on the northeast corner of Main and Fair Streets. The location is prominent because the County Office Building is across the Street on the south and the burying ground for the First Dutch Reformed Church is across the street on the west.

Prepared by: William C. Badger  
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) under joint sponsorship of the National Park Service and the Kingston Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission with financial assistance from the New York Council of the Arts. Measured and drawn during the summer of 1972 under the direction of John Poppeliers, chief of HABS and under the supervision of Roy Eugene Graham (University of Texas at Austin) by student architects Philip D. Ward (University of Washington); A. Carol Boerder (University of Texas at Austin) M. Morgan Gick (University of Notre Dame), and Stephen O. Fildes (Texas Tech University). The drawings were edited in December 1972 by architect John Burns. The written architectural and historical data was prepared by William C. Badger (University of Pennsylvania), the project historian, and edited in January 1980 by Susan McCown, a historian in the HABS office. The photos were taken in August 1973 by Jack E. Boucher of HABS staff.